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Persons with dementia “are given a voice” when music and singing are included as part of their everyday life

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The aim is to explore experiences and what importance it has for persons with dementia that singing and music are part of their everyday life and the rehabilitation effort

Songwriting is used as narrative method to involve persons with dementia in the action research process

The project contains three parts, which in addition to involve the perspective from the person with dementia and their relatives, also have focus on an professional, an interdisciplinary, an intersectoral perspective and an organizational perspective aimed at the conditions for implementation of singing and music in the rehabilitation efforts to persons with dementia.
Four institutions in Denmark participate.

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THE RESEARCH PROCESS:

1. Researcher meets the persons with dementia through the field studies

The persons with dementia has the potential and they are keen to »make their voices heard« and to talk about their experiences



2. Agreements are made with the persons, who wants to be involved in the research process

Informed consent be obtained from the participants



3. The first workshop: A creative process based on the theme: What does the music give you in your everyday life? What importance does the music have for you?

The persons with dementia composes jointly a song with 4 verses – the music therapist facilitates the process, in collaboration with the researcher and the team member



4. Cafe meeting: Dialogue with the persons with dementia and their relatives

New perspectives comes up

- My wife tells all the time about the song she was involved in composing - it meant a lot to her
- Music can help to rediscover and refresh good memories from the life together - before the disease
- Listen to and enjoy music together, provides to start dancing as in our young days - we get closer to each other again
- I see the spark of life in my husband's eyes again - just like when we were young together
- When my husband comes home after a day where singing and music have been the setting for the community, he is full of energy and joy. It rubs off on our everyday life together



5. The second Workshop: The themes: »togetherness about music« and »good memories« coming up at the cafe meeting, formed the joint starting point

The persons with dementia were very excited, had a lot of energy and wished to continue composing more verses to the song – they composed jointly further five verses to their song – the music therapist facilitates the process, in collaboration with the researcher and the team member



6. The song leads to new perspectives and ideas

- The persons with dementia often sings the song together, which provides a breeding ground for positive memories and new processes
- There is a desire conveying the song to others - for example at a concert or conference
- There is interest in developing the song with several verses - e.g. from the theme: How can music help us through the life that lies ahead of us?

ATTENTION POINTS:

- The choice of methodology must be person adjusted
- Involvement of person with dementia and their relatives must contribute to they feel valued, included and ultimately heard (Elstad & Eide 2009)
- Involvement can be practiced when it is adapted to the individuals
- The person involved must be provided with the sufficient and essential preconditions and must be supported to fulfill their role (Parkes et al. 2014)
- The researcher must recognize a plurality of knowledge forms (Thorgård 2012)
- The ethical, moral and legal code must always be in focus and guide the researcher

Music and togetherness

Lyrics: Marion, Jytte, Tonny, Leif Ivar, Knud, Carl, Anette, Inger, Jan, Poul and Aase Marie
Music: Poul

The music creates ambience
And thus fine color
And when we sing together
So we get a good mood
No matter who you are
So you can join
We gather in the
wonderful place of the music

When we sing and play together
A special form of fellowship
And in the mind it can be felt
As silence before a storm
No matter who you are
So you can join
We gather in the
wonderful place of the music

Coming here in "Krogen"
It feels quite nice
In the song, we can be assembled
Although you are a little sensitive
No matter who you are
So you can join
We gather in the
wonderful place of the music

The music can touch
All of us deeply somewhere
And so one can feel
That all are together
No matter who you are
So you can join
We gather in the
wonderful place of the music

When we gather in the family
And the music plays up
Then we can sing together
And dance body against body
No matter who you are
So you can join
We gather in the
wonderful place of the music

When I was in the 6th grade
And I should learn German
I got the urge to all the German
Although I only was from Jutland
No matter who you are
So you can join
We gather in the
wonderful place of the music

All people on this globe
Both from the north, south, east and west
Can with heart and with head
In the music best be assembled
No matter who you are
So you can join
We gather in the
wonderful place of the music

In the music one can feel
A unique cohesion
As medication it can be used
Both when you are happy and sad
No matter who you are
So you can join
We gather in the
wonderful place of the music

When we all helps
When we make promises as a flock
Then we can create small miracles
And it feels quite fantastic
No matter who you are
So you can join
We gather in the
wonderful place of the music

The Danish song
text is directly translated
into English
by Aase Marie
Ottesen

